

## Nevada prepares for the new GED® test



On January 2, 2014, GED Testing Service will unveil a new assessment that ensures the GED® testing program is no longer an endpoint for adults, but a springboard for more education, training, and better-paying jobs. Reflecting the first major changes since 2002, the new test will align with the new Common Core State Standards curricula adopted by Nevada and most other states.

The new assessment will continue to provide adults the opportunity to earn a high school credential, but it goes further by measuring career- and college-readiness skills that are the focus of today's curriculum and tomorrow's success. The new test will be administered only by computer at Official GED Testing Center™ locations starting January 2014. There will be four sections — literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies; the cost will be \$120.

Until the new assessment is launched, the 2002 Series GED® Test will be administered in both paper- and computer-based formats. (GED Computer-Based Testing launched in Nevada on March 1, 2013.) All parts of the 2002 Series must be completed by December 31, 2013, otherwise students must start the entire assessment again; no scores will carry over from the old test to the new.

For the latest information, FAQs, and resources, visit [www.gedtestingservice.com](http://www.gedtestingservice.com). For Nevada-specific information, contact Jeannine Woodward, [woodward@doe.nv.gov](mailto:woodward@doe.nv.gov), 775/687-7294.

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**During the 2011-12 fiscal year, 4,286 Nevadans earned their GEDs.**

—*Educating Nevada Out of the Recession*,  
NV Dept. of Education

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**342,346 Nevadans over the age of 18 do not have a High School Diploma.**

—*2011 American Community Survey*

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## Duplicate transcripts now provided by DiplomaSender

As in the past, the local testing center will continue to provide an original transcript and GED Certificate at no charge. However, as of April 1, requests for **duplicate** transcripts will be filled by DiplomaSender ([www.diplomasender.com](http://www.diplomasender.com)). The cost is \$15 when ordered online, \$21 for phone orders.

## Foster healthy anxiety in test-takers

*The New York Times* article “Why Can Some Kids Handle Pressure While Others Fall Apart?” (February 6, 2013, <http://nvae.us/7x>) provides a thoughtful rationale for reframing test-taking. Here is an excerpt from that article:

There are many psychological and physiological reasons that long-term stress is harmful, but the science of elite performance has drawn a different conclusion about short-term stress. Studies that compare professionals with amateur competitors — whether concert pianists, male rugby, or female volleyball players — show that professionals feel just as much anxiety as amateurs. The difference is in how they interpret their anxiety. The amateurs view it as detrimental, while the professionals tend to view stress as energizing. It gets them to focus.

A similar mental shift can also help students in test-taking situations. Jeremy Jamieson, assistant professor of social psychology at the University of Rochester, has done a series of experiments that reveal how the labeling of stress affects performance on academic testing.

(Continued on page 2)

## Progress in helping low-skilled adults

The [Joyce Foundation](#) has released a new [evaluation report](#), *Strengthening State Systems for Adult Learners*, on the first five years of its Shifting Gears Project. The project was initiated to address the increasing gap that exists between the skills possessed by the U.S. workforce and those needed to succeed in a competitive economy. The foundation launched the [Shifting Gears](#) initiative to bolster efforts to assist working-age adults

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**Included in the report are the four core activities found to be critical to success:**

- ✓ **strengthening alignment and collaboration across the adult education, workforce, and community and technical college systems**
  - ✓ **achieving buy-in and state leadership commitment to advance the chosen state strategy**
  - ✓ **making changes to specific state policies and regulations affecting local programs and delivery**
  - ✓ **engaging local practitioners and administrators to create local champions**
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who need to expand their skills. Joyce provided nearly \$8 million in funding, with matching amounts from state partners.

Shifting Gears provided states with a framework for identifying, adopting, and implementing innovative strategies for helping adults make more effective transitions into the workplace. It promoted systemic change through cross-sector collaboration by improving education and skills training. Six Midwestern states participated in the project.

The evaluation report sets forth the progress these states have made to date, and outlines those activities that have contributed the most to their successes. It notes four of the six states have adopted innovative strategies and changed policies to better serve low-skilled workers within Adult Basic Education, workforce development,

and community and technical college systems. Despite challenges, new education and training programs designed specifically for low-skilled adults are running and showing promise. Although initially small-scale, these programs are now set for expansion. View the full report at <http://nvae.us/7z>.

## ProLiteracy report shows high need, decreased funding

ProLiteracy surveyed one thousand member programs to collect data for its [2011–12 Statistical Member Report](#) (<http://nvae.us/80>). Analysis showed:

- The percentage of enrolled students who read below a third-grade level — barely able to understand compound words or identify nouns and verbs well enough to fill out an application, read a food label, or even read a simple story to a child — has risen to 25 percent.
- The majority of enrolled students are in their prime earning years, ranging in age from 25–59.
- Sixty-seven percent of enrolled students have less than a high school education.
- Fifty percent of new English language students are not literate in their native language.

Additionally, ProLiteracy programs show a five-year trend of receiving less federal and state funding. In 2007-08, 49 percent of programs received federal and/or state funding; that figure fell to 38 percent in 2011-12. Five years ago, state funding made up 25 percent of a program's overall budget. Now, that same source of funding accounts for just 18 percent.

## Test anxiety *(Continued from page 1)*

The first experiment was at Harvard University with undergraduates who were studying for the Graduate Record Examination. Before taking a practice test, the students read a short note explaining that the study's purpose was to examine the effects of stress on cognition. Half of the students, however, were also given a statement declaring that recent research suggests “people who feel anxious during a test might actually do better.” Therefore, if the students felt anxious during the practice test, it said, “you shouldn't feel concerned ... simply remind yourself that your arousal could be helping you do well.”

Just reading this statement significantly improved students' performance. They scored 50 points (out of a possible 800) higher in the quantitative section than the control group on the practice test. Remarkable as that seemed, it is relatively easy to get a result in a lab. Would it affect their actual G.R.E. results? A couple of months later, the students turned in their real G.R.E. scores. Jamieson calculated that the group taught to see anxiety as beneficial in the lab experiment scored 65 points higher than the controls. In ongoing work, Jamieson is replicating the experiment with remedial math students at a Midwestern community college; after they were told to think of stress as beneficial, their grades improved.

## Benefits of membership in NAE, MPAEA

In addition to membership benefits typically found in professional organizations, such as conferences, newsletters, and networking, the [Nevada Adult Educators](#) organization and the [Mountain Plains Adult Education Association](#) periodically offer extraordinary opportunities for their members. For example, ten Nevadans representing federally funded and Adult High School programs in Carson City, Fallon, Reno, and Las Vegas received scholarships from NAE to attend the MPAEA Conference in Cheyenne, WY in April. NAE also frequently offers free webinars on timely topics to its members.



[www.mpaea.org](http://www.mpaea.org)

MPAEA publishes the peer-reviewed *Journal of Adult Education* electronically twice annually, with periodic special “Information Series” issues. It is available worldwide through ProQuest, EBSCO, and ERIC — but it will come (free!) to your inbox if you’re an MPAEA member.

Editors [Gary Conti](#) and [Rita McNeil](#) encourage all adult educators to submit ideas for publication in the Journal. “We will happily provide extra help to MPAEA members so their manuscripts are in the best shape to be submitted to the reviewers,” said Gary.

Here are brief summaries of three (of six) pieces from the most recent issue:

- Technology, Learning, and Individual Differences. Study of 380 eBay auction users shows how adults exemplify self-direction and learn how-to-learn. The ATLAS (Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults) instrument was used to determine the users’ preferred learning strategies.
- Identifying Individual Differences: A Cognitive Styles Tool. Study of 255 clients at a One-Stop Career Center in Tulsa, OK led to development of AID (Addressing Individual Differences) tool. AID is a 3-by-3 screener in the areas of cognitive processing of decision-making styles, way-of-knowing approaches, and learning-strategy preferences.
- Book review of *The Multitasking Myth: Handling Complexity in Real-World Operations*, by Loukopoulos, Dismukes, and Barshi, 2009, indicates a “very readable book by three quality researchers.” The review concludes, “The danger of the multitasking myth is that many learners and teachers accept it and believe that they are sufficiently engaging in many tasks at the same time. While this may not be a fatal error for them ... it can impede the rate and quality of learning.”

## More useful resources for career clusters and career pathways

In addition to the five resources in the February issue, Professional Development Coordinator and CASAS Manager Claudia Bianca ([cbianca@tmcc.edu](mailto:cbianca@tmcc.edu), 775/824-8604) suggested these:

- <http://nvae.us/7h> — Excellent career pathways toolkit from Florida. For information on Florida’s Adult and Career Education best practices and resources, also see these websites:
  - <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/adulted> — Florida DOE adult education site
  - <http://www.floridaaecp.org> — information, resources, professional development for all adult education career pathways programs
  - <http://floridatechnet.org> — an electronic resources clearinghouse for practitioners
- [www.acp-sc.org](http://www.acp-sc.org) — The Adult Career Pathways Training and Support Center (ACP-SC) is a free comprehensive website that supports adult education providers in designing, implementing, and improving adult career pathways programs. You have unlimited access to instructional resources, implementation strategies, best practices, research, and other tools, as well as collaborative peer learning opportunities and resource-sharing.
- [www.pluggedinva.com](http://pluggedinva.com) — A career pathways program from Virginia that provides motivated adult learners with a contextualized General Educational Development (GED) curriculum integrated with industry-specific technical training as a means to develop essential workplace skills for entry-level jobs in targeted industries.
- <http://nvae.us/7i> — The Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) is a state-led initiative to establish a set of rigorous, high-quality standards for career technical education that states can adopt voluntarily. The CCTC has been informed by state and industry standards and developed by a diverse group of teachers, business and industry experts, administrators, and researchers.



This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

## Not just any job — a good one!

Many adults are attending school to get the skills they need to get a better job. But will they be able to find a good job? And just what is a good job? How do you get one? The March (2013) issue of *The Change Agent* explores these questions and more. Students share compelling stories of satisfying work, as well as dangerous and demeaning work and those jobs that are a mixture of both. Their advice and stories will inspire readers to make goals, learn skills, and think critically about the world of work. In addition to providing food for thought, this issue shares concrete examples of ordinary people — alone and with others — taking steps to be agents of change in the workplace.

## Change Agent calls for articles on technology: by May 3

Calling all adult education students and teachers! How have changes in technology affected your education? Write us your thoughts for the fall issue of *The Change Agent*. Tell us about your views on social media, or how different members in your family interact with new technologies. Share your favorite educational app. More writing prompts and details about how to submit articles (cartoons and graphics are welcome too!) are available in the [Call for Articles](http://nelrc.org/changeagent/write.htm) at <http://nelrc.org/changeagent/write.htm>.



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